

# **MATH ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

JANUARY 16 FOCUS GROUP

# WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY “ACHIEVEMENT GAP?”

A persistent gap in performance as measured by state-wide assessments between previously defined student subgroups



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# WHY DO ACHIEVEMENT GAPS EXIST?

## Explanations offered by the literature:

- Student characteristics
- Teacher backgrounds and beliefs
- Resource allocation
- School climate
- Community involvement



# WHAT WOULD CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS?

## Potential solutions offered by literature:

- Creating highly effective schools
- Professional development for teachers
- Providing high quality early learning opportunities
- Adding more academic time on task



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# HIGHLY EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

- Strong leadership
- Good teachers
- Internal accountability
- School-wide professional development
- Parent/community involvement
- Data to drive instructional decisions
- Access to early childhood education programs
- Attention to health and safety of students



# TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- NOT individual, but school-wide
- Professional development on:
  - Math content
  - Teaching math content
  - Teaching diverse groups of students
  - Teaching students living in poverty
  - Teaching students for whom English is not the predominant or only home language



# ACADEMIC TIME ON TASK

- NOT just more time in school
- NOT emphasis on test preparation or drilling basic skills
- Build on familiar contexts and personal experiences of learners
- Nurture confidence and mathematical identity
- Authentic problems and group learning
- Leverage community members to add personalization
- Challenge the misconception that there are “math people” and “not math people”

